STRENGTH OF ARMED CHINA

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na's present force would certainly have no show in a stand-up fight with armored ships, but with her cruisers and gunboats told off for commerce destroying and transport attack, and her torpedo boats and destroyers in hardy hands set against the enemy's forces of all sorts—for a torpedo boat's sting may mean a battleship's death—the Chinese navy becomes anything but a passive force.

In fact, inspired by that reckless spirit easily aroused in the Chinaman half-way well led, a Chinese torpedo boat or "destroyer" might accomplish a great deal more than a modern battleship in the same hands, for the fear of death and the facing of appalling odds are things weighed lightly by the Mongolian mind when once thoroughly aroused.

THE CHINESE SAILOR.

Generally the ships of the Chinese navy have been undermanned, but there are water-bred and seafaring natives enough to man any number of Chinese fighting ships. In physique the native sailorman is a fine man, and of his endurance the whole world knows. In the battle of the Yalu the Chinaman proved in many instances the sterner stuff in him, and that baptism of fire has done a vast deal to strengthen the fighting spirit of the present Chinese jacky. Mentally he is a fatalist, and the prospect of death does not phase him if he be properly led, and there are plenty of his own countrymen and men of other nations only too ready to lead him if occasion require.

NAVAL SCHOOLS.

It is not generally known that the Chinese have their own naval schools—two, in fact—and that they are no longer dependent upon foreigners for their engineer and executive officers.

The sum granted yearly from the imperial exchequer for the whole of this work is 42,000 Tsaoping taels, approximately $30,000. Each student costs the government to house, feed, clothe, provide with books and instruments, and even liberal pocket money from a Chinese point of view, $250 a year, or $1,500 to turn out an efficient executive or engineer officer, pledged to government service for life.

Everything is done in the English language, and no better proof of the work done by the student can be had than the testimony of a British naval attache: "I have been very much interested in examining the students' papers. I consider them exceedingly well done. They are wonderfully good with regard to style, neatness and clearness, as well as regard to correctness of answers. Papers worked by our own students would not be generally better done."

The present Chinese minister to England, Lo-Fun-Loh, is a graduate of the now abandoned Foochow Naval College; and the commissioner of the Tien Tsin Naval College today, Taotai Yen-Foo, completed his studies in England, and was the first man of his year at Greenwich.

The students, like those at Tien Tsin, are sons of gentlemen, and are admitted from sixteen to twenty years of age.

RIVER GUNBOATS.

In addition to the regular naval force there are a dozen pretty heavily armed river gunboats that have done revenue service. These vessels range in speed from seven to twelve knots, have been built since '86 and would prove invaluable adjuncts to the Chinese army when working in the shoal reaches of the rivers beyond the approach of the heavier foreign vessels of the gunboat type. There are several transports—vessels from 1,200 to 1,400 tons—which could be made considerable factors of naval force, while the war junks which have filled many of the southern rivers would easily afford disciplined complements for the modern fighting craft of the navy.

It must not be forgotten that piracy has been a daily calling with thousands of the coast-born Chinese for hundreds of years, and men with that undercurrent of desperation can be found in plenty to do the bid of reckless leaders of torpedo boat "destroyers" and the like in the pursuit of a guerilla warfare.

CHINA'S REGULAR ARMY.

Of trained military force, as we understand the modern application of the term, it is not likely that China can boast at present of more than sixty or seventy thousand men; but of military retainers or untrained coolies there are in reserve quite three hundred or four hundred thousand.

Of the trained troops, the bulk of whom are armed with a Mauser pattern repeating rifle, most of which have been made right in the Chinese arsenals, our military and naval attaches speak in complimentary terms. The men are a fine lot physically, well set up and very snappy in their movements in drill. Their discipline is excellent and they hesitate at the performance of no maneuver, no matter how novel. The cavalry proper and the irregular cavalry are also a fine body of men and mounted on their sturdy native ponies, they go through their evolutions with the same quick, elastic movement characteristic of the other trained troops that have felt the influence of European teaching either directly or indirectly.

The artillery, equipped with a large number of typically up-to-date ordnance, are capable of very effective work, and the same active spirit prevails there as with the two other arms of the service. It is in transportation and organized commissariat that the Chinese army is weak, but with the vast numbers of available coolies the difficulty of efficient transport can be remedied to a large extent.

A SOURCE OF WEAKNESS.

The provincial independence of each division of the Chinese military forces is the source of its greatest weakness, as was proved in the war with Japan, but the lessons of that unsuccessful struggle have been taken to heart and to some extent the error has been corrected.

In equipment the troops that have not been trained in accordance with European methods are armed with a very heterogeneous lot of fighting tools, among which the ancient and ineffective gingal takes a prominent part. The gingal is a weapon some nine or ten feet in length, weighing between forty and fifty pounds. Three men are required to work it, and when ready to be fired, two rest it upon their shoulders while the third tries to point it and to fire. The terror of such an arm is more one of imagination than performance, and the mobility of troops armed with such a burden is sure to be seriously handicapped.

HAS SEVEN ARSENALS.

Of arsenals China has seven. One at Tien Tsin, one at Shanghai, one at Nanking, one at Hankow, one at Foochow, one at Canton, and one at Chingtu. While the really fine mechanical equipments of these stations are largely occupied in turning out useless gingals and some other obsolete guns of more modern pattern, still a very considerable share of work is given over to manufacturing ordnance and small arms of a thoroughly up-to-date type, including fine repeating rifles, heavy navy and coast defense guns, and siege and field pieces of recent design. The workmanship, in most cases, is of a very superior order, and the machinery in the shops is of the best British and German make, while the superintendents or foremen are generally technically trained foreigners or Chinese similarly educated abroad.

ROBERT G. SKERRETT.

MINISTER WU GIVES OPINIONS

Will Not Obey the Orders of the Peking Anarchists.

WASHINGTON, July 15.—No one in America is more eager for the latest news from China than is Mr. Wu Ting-fang, the Chinese Minister, and no one regrets more than he does the untoward events that have taken place in that country in the last few weeks. Mr. Wu is too great a statesman not to understand just how delicate is the situation in which his country has been placed by these unfortunate circumstances; he is too well read in the history of other nations not to know the danger that confronts China in case of concerted action on the part of the allied Powers of the world.

"Although I had had no confirmation of the recent despatches received by the State Department," Minister Wu said to-day, "I have felt very much alarmed at the reported condition of affairs in Pekin. I was prepared for almost anything. The murder of the German Minister shocked me inexpressibly. After that news was confirmed I was ready for any calamity, and hence the despatch I received yesterday from Sheung, Director-General of Imperial Telegraphs came as a great relief. If the Emperor and the Empress Dowager are imprisoned in the palace, and Prince Tuan, with his Boxers, is in control of Pekin, which I hope is not the case, then the Government I represent is for the present overwhelmed. While this state of anarchy lasts I shall obey no unreasonable orders. The Viceroys of the various provinces feel as I do, and until peace is restored they, too, will use their discretion in obeying orders. All are loyal to the Emperor, and it is only the people in the province of Chili who are in a state of rebellion.

"The mob in Pekin has evidently got quite beyond the control of the Government. It is very unfortunate for China that the Government was not strong enough to suppress the uprising at the outset. The explanation for its inability to cope with the difficulty lies in the fact that there is widesperad disaffection among the Imperial troops. Sympathizing with the anti-foreign element, as many of them did, it was impossible to expect very energetic action on their part when sent out to chastise the Boxers. If small things can be compared to great ones, we see in China now a condition parallel to that which existed in France in the days of the Commune. The Imperial troops of China have made common cause with the mob just as the soldiers of the French king did at the time of the historic revolution in that country.

"There is no people on earth toward whom the Chinese have a friendlier feeling than they have toward the Americans. It is now about half a century since the first treaty between the two nations was concluded. It stipulated that there should be peace and friendship between China and the United States and between their people respectively. Not once has the letter or the spirit of that treaty been violated. On the other hand, the United States have several times exerted their friendly offices in behalf of China, and as the Chinese are a grateful people, they have appreciated those services. Never have the United States shown any desire for territorial acquisition at the expense of China, and this fact alone would go far to strengthen trust in her. But although the Chinese entertain this sentimental regard for the United States as a nation, they are not always able to distinguish the Americans, as individuals, from representatives of other foreign countries. The dress and physiognomy of Europeans and Americans are so similar that the uneducated Chinaman classes them all alike as foreigners, and the mob makes victims of them all, I fear.

"I don't know much about this Prince Tuan, who seems to have the upper hand at present if the reports about him are true. He has come into prominence since I left China. He is one of the many Manchu princelings supported by the Imperial Government. The present Emperor is the ninth of the Manchu dynasty, which has occupied the throne for over two hundred years. The Manchus came originally from Manchuria. China was in the throes of a civil war at the time and the ruling power called in the aid of the Manchus, who, after suppressing the rebellion, assumed the reins of government. Among the Manchus of noble birth are many who are poor. Prevented by their aristocratic ideas from entering into any commercial enterprises they are compelled to live upon the slender pittance allowed them by the Government. Until lately Prince Tuan, although a cousin of the Emperor, passed among them unnoticed. A few months ago he came into prominence through the fact that his son, a child about 10 years old, was named heir apparent. It is not customary for an heir to the throne to be named before the Emperor is dead, but for some reason it has been done in this instance."

A determined lady from the West visited Washington, D.C., not long ago, for the purpose of interviewing a member of the Cabinet on a subject of interest to her. She called, as it happened, just at the time when the frauds in the Cuban postal department were made public, and the majority of the President's advisers, absorbed in considering the matter, had given instructions that they were not to be disturbed. "So you refuse to take my card to the Secretary?" asked the determined lady of the messenger. "It would be against my orders, and I don't dare to," replied the messenger, politely. The visitor turned away in high dudgeon, but a happy thought occurred to her, and she retraced her steps. "Here, my man," she said, insinuatingly, "here is fifty cents: now will you take my card in? "I'm paid a bigger salary than that to keep your card out, madam," responded the darkey, shaking his head.

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